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BAPTISM;

ITS

TRUE NATURE, OBJECT, NECESSITY, AND USES,

AS

One of the Sacraments

APPOINTED BY OUR SAVIOUR, AT THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

BY THE

REV. WOODVILLE WOODMAN,

OF KERSLEY.

“What mean ye by this service?”—Exodus xii. 26.

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PREFACE.

THE object for which the following pages have been written, is sufficiently indicated in the title; and what relates to the subject itself has been, it is believed, pretty fully entered on in the work: little, therefore, remains to be said by way of preface. In entering on the investigation of a subject which has so recently caused an excitement of no ordinary kind, it would be nearly impossible altogether to pass over the circumstances out of which that excitement arose. Indeed, it has not been attempted. It is hoped, however, that the few allusions that have been made to the controversy which has given so great prominence to the subject of this pamphlet, will be found free from a sectarian spirit; and that, where the author has felt it necessary to point out what appeared to him the difficulties connected with the doctrines of others, and that of the Established Church in particular, he has done so in a spirit of fairness and Christian charity.

The importance of the subject, no one, it is presumed, will call in question. How far the explanation given of it here may be satisfactory, the reader must decide for himself. One thing which, in the estimation of the writer, ought to have its weight, is, that the investigation in these pages does not turn on the external points so often raised on the subject of Baptism, such as the respective merits of sprinkling and immersion, but on the more momentous questions, of

its nature, necessity, and uses. So far as this relates to infant baptism, it can hardly fail to have a deep interest, not only in a theological aspect, but with parents also, from its direct bearing on the welfare of their offspring. Perhaps one of the most interesting phases under which it is presented to parental feelings, is, that in consequence of its representative character, and the nature of the laws according to which it is instituted—those of correspondence—that the validity of the rite, and the benefit imparted to the child in the ordinance, are not affected by the amount of knowledge on the subject possessed by those who administer it.

The writer may perhaps be excused for adding, that he feels indifferent as far as regards any thing that may accrue personally to himself from this publication, either favourable or otherwise. He has been induced to enter on the task, from the consideration that what has been effectual in removing the difficulties of himself and the body he is connected with, may be the means of doing so in the case of others : and he feels assured in his own mind, that the views here presented, if he has succeeded in presenting them in an intelligible form, cannot fail to have a similar effect on those who will take the trouble to understand them. He, therefore, once for all, commends them to the candid attention of those into whose hands this book may fall, in the fervent hope that, under the divine blessing, it may prove beneficial to the true interests of Christian truth.

BAPTISM.

WHOEVER seriously reflects on the “signs of the times,” must feel that the present state of the Christian world, as regards doctrine, is in the highest degree anomalous and unsatisfactory. Nothing, perhaps, presents its condition in a more striking point of view, than the fact, that, among the other controversial topics which divide Christians, the operation and effect attending the first ordinance, whereby admission is given into the Christian body—that of BAPTISM—is a matter of dispute.

In the Romish and Anglican Churches,* it is held to be a “direct instrument of grace ;” in other

* In classing the views of the Romish and English Churches on Baptism under one head, it is not intended to affirm that they are in every respect identical: the chief point of difference is, that the Anglican Church holds the *guilt* of original sin to be done away by Baptism; whereas the Romish holds, that not only the guilt, but the very *essence* of original sin, is thereby removed.—See *Bishop Bethel on Regeneration*, Preface.

words, that the application of water, by a properly qualified functionary, confers regeneration.

The view generally held by the Reformed Churches on the continent, is, that it is not the "*instrument*" but the "*seal*" of grace: divine blessings being thereby, not communicated, but confirmed.

A third view, that of the Baptists, is, that it is a "token of regeneration," to be received only by those who give evidence of being really regenerated.

The Congregationalists hold generally, that it is a "symbol of purification," and its use, simply to announce that the religion of Christ is a purifying religion.

The views taken by the Socinians, is, that it is neither "an instrument" nor a "seal" of grace, but simply a ceremony of initiation into church membership.*

In examining the preceding views, it is difficult to decide which has the preference. To call Baptism a "token," or even a "seal," defines no intelligible spiritual use; and to resolve it into a "ceremony of initiation," is to reduce it to a mere matter of form. It is difficult to see in what intelligible sense Baptism is a "token of regenera-

* The preceding outline of the different views of Baptism, is substantially extracted from *Kitto's Biblical Cyclopædia*. See *Baptism*.

tion," when those who regard it as such, demand, previous to the administration of the ordinance, the evidence of regeneration having taken place in the person to be baptized; and thus in reality demand a token of a higher and more valid nature than the one they confer. A similar objection lies against the view of those who hold it to be a "seal of regeneration," since in this case it is merely the superaddition of a human seal to a divine work, which can give neither additional sanction nor validity. The symbolical character of Baptism will come under consideration in a future part of this pamphlet: for the present, suffice it to remark, that, unless something *more* than a symbol is involved in this ordinance, it is, in reality, notwithstanding its symbolic reference, a mere form or ceremonial.

The doctrine of baptismal regeneration, propounded in the liturgy and articles of the Church of England, is characterized by a degree of obscurity, sufficiently indicated in the fact, that it not only is, and ever has been, a subject of dispute, whether regeneration is effected by the sacramental application of water, or by some "prevenient act of grace;" but appears as far from being decided as ever. More than this; present symptoms indicate the widening, rather than the healing, of the breach, as witness the question

now at issue between the Bishop of Exeter and Mr. Gorham. The manner in which it is stated in the liturgy, leaves the question undecided, if indeed it does not equally favour both sides. In the baptismal service, for instance, the prayer beseeches the Most High to "*sanctify the WATER to the mystical washing away of sins;*" whereas in the thanksgiving with which the service concludes, regeneration is declared to have been effected by the *Holy Spirit* :—"We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant *with thy Holy Spirit.*" Thus the question, whether the infant is regenerated by the water and the Holy Spirit conjointly, or, whether, as Mr. Gorham maintains, even infants "cannot receive any benefit from Baptism, except there shall have been a prevenient act of grace,"* is left altogether undecided. Nor do the catechism and articles place the subject in any greater degree of certainty. The former defines Baptism to consist of "the outward and visible sign, and the inward and spiritual grace,"—the "water wherein the person is baptized" constituting the *sign*, and the *grace* being "a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness." The article † declares

* Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury from the Bishop of Exeter, p. 48. Seventeenth edition.

† Art. xxvii.

it to be “a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the church, and the promises of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost are visibly signed and sealed, faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God.” The phrases employed in the preceding extracts to describe the effects of Baptism, are exceedingly vague. How far they are used synonymously, or stand for different things, is left to conjecture; and yet nearly the whole question at issue turns on this point. When the minister, in one instance, prays that the *water* may be sanctified “to the mystical washing away of sins,” and in another, offers up the thanks of the congregation to the Lord, “that he has been pleased to regenerate the infant *with his Holy Spirit* ;” it needs no argument to shew how much depends on the ideas attached to these two expressions—whether the “mystical washing away of sins,” and “regeneration,” are to be regarded as identical, or, whether two things, distinct from each other, are to be understood thereby. The statement in the article, on the subject of the benefits resulting from Baptism, lies open to the same objection. The manner in which the ordinance is spoken of in the Baptismal service, certainly favours the idea of its being an *instrument* of regeneration, effecting “a

death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness;" in the article, on the other hand, it is merely said to be "a *sign* of regeneration," and an "*instrument*" of engrafting those who receive it rightly, into the church; of visibly signing and sealing the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of adoption to be the sons of God; and of confirming and increasing faith and grace, by virtue of prayer to God; whilst every one is left to determine for himself how far he ought to understand the terms "*sign*," and "*instrument*," synonymously, or otherwise. To render the perplexity still greater, the benefits here particularized are intelligible only so far as they are understood as applying to adults. The restriction of the blessings resulting from the ordinance, to "*those who receive it rightly*," if intended to refer to infants, would be absurd. The "confirmation and increase of faith and grace," are blessings of which only such as are of riper years can be the subjects. No sooner, however, are the spiritual effects resulting from baptism *rightly received*, thus defined, than the article abruptly adds, without attempting any explanation,—"*The Baptism of young children is IN ANY WISE to be retained in the church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.*" Who, that reflects, can escape the difficulty, naturally arising from the blessings communicated by Baptism being defined to be of such a nature as can

only be received by those possessed of rationality, when at the same time the baptism of infants is insisted on as an institution "in any wise to be retained in the church," without offering any solution, beyond affirming that it is "most agreeable to the institution of Christ?" The mode in which some have attempted to escape the difficulty is thus described by the present Primate of all England:* "Unquestionably there is much difficulty, much mystery in the case, as regards the Baptism of infants—a difficulty which many divines have *solved* (?), by supposing that the spiritual benefit of Baptism, 'a death unto sin and new birth unto righteousness,' is only received where there has been an antecedent act of grace on the part of God." (!) So that it appears, the views respectively espoused by the Bishop of Exeter and Mr. Gorham, are the Scylla and Charybdis of the church, and that there is no other mode of avoiding the one, than by rushing into the jaws of the other: to take the illustration of scripture, it is "*as if a man did flee from a lion and a bear met him.*"†

The effects of such a conflicting state of opinions on the interests of religion, cannot be otherwise than injurious. So great a diversity of views must produce the impression that the greatest

* As quoted in the Bishop of Exeter's Letter, p. 27.

† Amos, v. 19.

uncertainty surrounds the subjects of religious faith. When so many uses, for the most part differing in their nature, are assigned to the ordinance of Baptism;—when by one body of Christians it is regarded as a “seal of grace;”—by another, as a “token of regeneration,” which is to be administered to those alone who have given evidence that they are the subjects of the new birth;—by a third, that it is simply a “symbolical rite,” symbolizing and announcing “the purifying character of the religion of Christ;”—by a fourth, that it is no more than a “ceremonial of initiation into church membership;” whilst the Church of England, not only holds a view distinct from any of the preceding, but is divided in herself on the sense in which that view is to be understood:—many, it is to be feared, will be led to question the existence of any real benefits whatsoever in connection with it. The sceptical—and there are but too many such—will confirm themselves in the idea, that the act of pouring or sprinkling water on the head of an infant, cannot contribute any thing to salvation; and in the denial, that any sanctity belongs to this ordinance, except what has been attributed to it by church authority.*

* See Chapter on Baptism in *The Universal Theology of the New Church*; No. 667.

In coming before the public, the writer may perhaps be met by the objection, that, instead of lessening, he is increasing the difficulty,—that by adding to the number of conflicting views already entertained, he is only rendering the subject more complicated. He begs to reply, that Baptism is either a divinely appointed ordinance, or it is not; and, as such, possesses a use commensurate therewith, or it does not. Those who take the affirmative, must feel how desirable it is that a clue should be discovered which could extricate the church from its difficulties, without the danger of a Scylla on the one hand, or a Charybdis on the other;—that an intelligible solution should be found such as the mind can rationally grasp.* Few sensible men, it is supposed, will adopt the sentiment of the Bishop of Exeter, in his letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury.† “ In dealing

* It is not intended by this remark, to intimate that human reason, *of itself*, can arrive at just conclusions on this, or any other subject; but reason, when enlightened by revelation. Revelation and reason stand in a relation to each other analogous to that of light to the eye. Both are indispensable to physical vision. The rational faculty is the eye of the mind: without it we could no more enjoy mental sight, than we could possess physical vision without its corresponding organ in the body; whilst revelation alone can supply the light, as indispensable to the exercise of the spiritual faculty, as are the rays of the sun to the bodily organ.

† Page 18.

with the great mysteries of our religion—such as the grace of our Lord's Sacraments most undoubtedly is—I am not in the habit—and pardon me when I say that others ought not to be in the habit — of referring the judgment of them to human reason. ‘To the Law and to the Testimony,’ and to the Church's interpretation of that Law and Testimony when it be doubtful—is the rule by which I hope always to direct myself in such matters.” With due deference to his Lordship, we urge the views about to be propounded in this pamphlet, on the ground that they are intelligible, and founded on a rational analysis of the doctrine of scripture on the subject. What is *unintelligible* can never *really* become a matter of faith. We *believe*, in the exact proportion that we *understand*, and no further.* A faith in what is *not* under-

* As this may appear a somewhat startling assertion to some of our readers, a brief illustration of its truth is offered. Those who hold the dogma, that what is unintelligible may become the object of faith, usually support it by arguments, of which the following is a type: “I believe that the grass grows, and yet I do not know *how* it grows.” The slightest reflection would suffice to convince such from their own illustration, in which two facts are put together, the one intelligible and the other not, that the fact believed is that which is understood. The fact which is believed is, “that the grass *grows*”—a fact not only comprehensible, but palpable to the senses. That which is *not* understood, viz., “*how* the grass grows” is not believed. Any one may convince himself of this, by attempting to explain what he believes as respects the “*HOW*.”

stood is a faith in name only—a mere persuasion. Hence we contend, that the genuine view of the nature of Baptism and its uses, will be found to be an intelligible one; and that, though many views are already in existence, which are either unintelligible, or suggest uses which, when examined, involve no real *spiritual* benefit, it is no reason why the research should be given up in despair, and ought not to deter the candid and sincere from seeking for the desired satisfaction elsewhere.

Another claim we beg to prefer in favour of the views about to be offered, is, that they stand on grounds altogether distinct from those on which others rest. In addition to being founded on well-defined general principles, and having the support of the letter of the Sacred Scriptures, still further light is thrown on the subject by the development of the spiritual or internal meaning of the Holy Bible. Some may probably be disposed to regard this claim with suspicion; and others may be inclined at once to reject a view which supposes the existence of a spiritual meaning in the Sacred Oracles, without examination. We however intreat the patience of the reader ere he forms his decision. We would first demand, if the views deduced from what is commonly called (or rather *miscalled*) “*the plain meaning*” of

Scripture, have been successful? We would inquire whence all the perplexities which surround the subject have arisen? These are not the results of a spiritual interpretation, but the reverse; having grown out of an interpretation professedly based on purely literal principles. In so distracted a state of religious opinion—one which it is scarcely possible to render worse, we earnestly recommend to the reader, for his own sake, not to suffer himself to be diverted from the pursuit of truth by prepossessions, howsoever widely entertained, against any particular mode of acquiring it. It is only one of the many modifications of the scepticism of all ages in regard to divine things:—one of the forms under which the old question re-appears, “*Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?*” Let him bring what amount of caution he pleases; we are quite willing to leave the subject to his candour, assured that the cause of truth cannot suffer by the strictness of the scrutiny to which it is subjected.

It is unnecessary to enter on the question of the divine origin of Baptism. The Lord gave his own divine sanction, when he commissioned his apostles to “go and make disciples* of all nations, baptizing them in (or more properly, “*into*”) the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy

* See marginal reading.

Ghost.”* The question which really interests, as it has unfortunately divided the church, is, in what the Use and Necessity of the ordinance consist? Why introduction into the Christian Church could not have been as effectually accomplished by some other means? What is the efficacy of the water, when sacramentally applied? It cannot, and indeed is not attempted to be denied, that Christian Baptism is the medium of some important use. Had it not been so, it would not have been given to the church under the divine auspices.

Two uses have been suggested for the application of water, in the views we have briefly stated,—one symbolic, and the other purificatory: the former maintaining that the object contemplated therein is, to set forth symbolically the purifying character of the Christian religion; and the other, that the mystical washing away of sins is effected thereby. That one of the uses of Baptism is symbolical, we see no reason to doubt, as we shall shortly more fully explain. As regards the dogma, which holds that sins are washed away by the sacramental application of water, candour constrains us to say that it is opposed alike to the rational perceptions of the mind, and the general tenor of scripture. “Not

* Matt. xxviii. 19.

that," saith the Lord, on the occasion of the Pharisees accusing his disciples of eating bread with unwashen hands,—“not that which goeth in at the mouth defileth the man* ;” much less can that which is only applied to the surface of the body *cleanse* “the man.” It requires no great depth of thought to see that water, even though applied in Baptism, can no more purify the spirit, than could the “carnal ordinances” of the Mosaic law, “which stood in meats and drinks and divers washings,” make “him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience.” † They might sanctify “to the purifying of the flesh‡,” but beyond that they could not go.

The chief argument in favour of the mystical washing away of sins in Baptism, is taken from the Lord’s declaration to Nicodemus§, “Except a man be born of *water and the Spirit*, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” But the advocates of this doctrine appear to have overlooked, what is the fact, that the word here translated “Spirit,” means literally “wind,” and is the same which occurs in verse 8, where it is rendered, “The *wind* bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth : so is every one that is born

* Matt. xv. 11.

† Heb. ix. 9, 10.

‡ Ver. 13.

§ John iii. 5.

of the Spirit [literally, *wind*].” The genuine meaning of this passage will come under our consideration hereafter; for the present suffice it to observe, that to take one of the terms in its literal acceptation, and the other in its metaphorical sense, which is done by those who regard it as affirming the doctrine of Baptismal regeneration, is to violate every sound principle of interpretation.*

It has been previously intimated, that some knowledge of the spiritual sense of the sacred volume is essential to the right understanding of the nature and use of Baptism: a few words on this subject will therefore be necessary.

By the Scripture having a Spiritual Sense, is meant, that under every part of the letter there is an internal meaning, in which it refers solely to heavenly and divine things. It possesses this peculiarity by virtue of its being the Word of God; since that which was spoken by God himself, must be the divine truth, and necessarily contain within it all heavenly and divine wisdom.† For whatsoever proceeds from God, must bear on it a transcript of

* The minds of some of our readers may revert to the injunction of Ananias to Paul, (Acts xxii. 16,) “Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins.” The consideration of this passage will more conveniently occur in another place.

† See *Doctrine of the New Jerusalem concerning the Sacred Scripture*; n. 2.

the divine mind and attributes. That such is the case with the visible creation, is attested by the apostle Paul, who declares, that "the invisible things of God are clearly seen" there, "being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead."* If such be the character of outward nature, the Word must possess the same character in a supereminent degree. Both nature and revelation, being outbirths from Deity, are embodiments of the divine love and wisdom for the use of man: the former, for the uses which affect the welfare of the body; the latter, for those which relate to the welfare of the soul. In both, are found the same consummate order, dependence, and concatenation: in the one, it is the mutual dependence of created subjects; in the other, the concatenation of divine truth. The same divine love and wisdom are brought nigh, and made available to man, in both; the difference being, that, in nature, they have clothed themselves with material forms in sensible objects, whereas, in the Word, they are veiled under the drapery of natural ideas and language. God is moreover equally omnipresent in both: in nature, by that stupendous chain of cause on cause, through which the operation of his love and wisdom is conveyed, as from link to link, to the

* Romans i. 20.

ultimate effects of the visible world ; in his Word, by its truths, which flow down from him in one unbroken series, and in their passage, as so many rays of the Sun of Righteousness, bear the image of their Divine Fountain to both angelic and human intelligences. In other words, God, “ who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, and whom no man hath seen, nor can see*,” cannot in his naked Divinity become the object of any finite thought, however exalted. His transcendent brightness must be veiled over ere it can become appreciable to human apprehension. Revelation, therefore, consists in the successive coverings thrown around the divine character, whereby its brightness is successively softened, and accommodated to the perceptions of angels ; and ultimately, by means of the letter, to the grosser apprehensions of men. The letter is frequently spoken of in scripture under the symbol of “ *a cloud*,” and the spirit, as “ *glory*.” The apostle Paul describes the gross ideas under which the Jewish people laboured by saying, “ Moreover, brethren, I would not have you ignorant that all our fathers were under *the cloud* †.” for although he here unquestionably alludes to the “ pillar of a cloud,” whereby God directed their movements through the wilderness, he nevertheless obviously

* 1 Timothy vi. 16.

† 1 Cor. x. 1.

recognizes in it, as he did in the circumstance of Moses wearing a veil over his face*, a typical representation of the obscurity in which their minds were involved, in consequence of resting in the mere types and shadows of their law, and not being able to look steadfastly to the end of that which was to be abolished.† He adds, in his spiritual application of Moses putting a veil over his face, that until that day remained the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament :—" but even," he says, "unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is on their hearts." Of those, on the other hand, who were "not in the letter that killeth," but in "the spirit that giveth life," he he says, "But we all, with open (or unveiled) face beholding as in a glass *the glory of the Lord*, are changed into the image of the same, from glory to glory."‡

The key, whereby the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures can alone be unlocked, is "the Science of Correspondences," or, of the mutual relationship in which all things are linked together, and whereby they depend on their great First Cause; and the consequent analogy they bear to each other, and primarily to Deity. It will be obvious, on candid reflection, that such a science, when understood, must open up all the arcana in the

* 2 Cor. iii.

† v. 13.

‡ v. 18.

works of God, as well as in his Word; for the laws involved in the relationship of created things to each other and to the Creator, emanating as they do from the Divine Wisdom, embrace all the truths in existence. It is, therefore, by the aid of this science, that the mind will be enabled to rise into universal principles of thought; that the disjointed facts and principles, which now lie scattered among the physical sciences like the dry bones in the valley of Ezekiel's vision*, will be gathered up, and resuscitated into new and living forms of truth; and that every department of knowledge and reason will be brought into alliance with, and rendered the willing handmaids of, religion and revelation. Correspondence, therefore, is not merely a science, but "THE SCIENCE OF SCIENCES," and cannot fail to be hailed as such, in the degree that it becomes known and understood. The same mutual relationship and adaptation exist necessarily in the Word, since in no other mode could the divine wisdom be embodied in the natural expressions of human language; the letter and the spirit of the Word are therefore united with each other, and make one also with the divine wisdom, by virtue of the correspondence between the natural sense and the spiritual, and between these and the wisdom of God which is

* Ezek. xxxvii. 1—10.

their inmost essence.* The doctrine of correspondences, consequently, throws light on the "dark sayings"† of the letter, and brings forth transcendent beauty from the portions, which, in consequence of the ignorance prevailing on correspondences, have furnished weapons to the enemies of revealed truth, and been a source of difficulty to its friends.‡

It was by virtue of all things in the Jewish tabernacle and temple, and the worship offered in them, being based on the correspondence which natural things bear to spiritual, or earthly to heavenly, and arranged according to its laws, that the divine presence could be visibly manifested, and rest there. For this reason, Moses was so strictly enjoined to make all things according to the pattern which was shewn him in the mount§, in order that they might thus truly represent heavenly and divine subjects. It was also from the

* See *Doctrine of the New Jerusalem respecting the Sacred Scripture*; n. 6.

† Psalm lxxviii. 2.

‡ The reader may obtain further information on the subject of correspondences by consulting *Noble's Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures*; *Hindmarsh's Letters to Dr. Priestley*; *Clissold's Letter to the Archbishop of Dublin*; *Madeley On the Science of Correspondences*; and *The Arcana Cælestia, Apocalypse Explained, Apocalypse Revealed*, and *Universal Theology*, of Swedenborg.

§ Heb. viii. 5; Exodus xxv. 40; xxvi. 30.

same cause that the Holy of Holies became the dwelling place of the visible symbol of Jehovah's presence, and that so many miracles were performed by the Ark of the Covenant, on the mercy seat of which the Shekinah of the divine glory rested: that when, for instance, the feet of those who bare it touched the waters of Jordan, the river opened a passage for the Israelites to pass through on dry ground*; that, when carried round Jericho, the walls fell down, and admitted the Israelites to walk straight up into the city†; that when, being captured by the Philistines it was placed in their temple, Dagon, their god, fell from his seat, and severed his head and hands in his fall‡; that, at its presence, the Ashdodites, and Ekronites, were smitten with emerods, and their land overrun with mice§; that so many of the Bethshemites, through looking into it, were slain.|| That Uzzah, when he touched it, was smitten dead¶; and that a blessing rested on Obed-edom, through receiving it into his house.**

The knowledge of the spiritual sense of the Holy Scriptures will therefore explain the representative

* Joshua iii. and iv. † Chap. vi. 1—16. ‡ 1 Samuel iv. and v.

§ Chap. v. and vi. || Ver. 19. ¶ 2 Samuel vi. 6, 7.

** Ver. 11. The spiritual signification of the previous miraculous circumstances connected with the ark is fully explained in *The Apocalypse Explained*, vol. iv., n. 700.

rites and ceremonies of the Israelitish Church, the majority of which would otherwise be unintelligible. The Israelitish people, and their history, have a place in the letter of Sacred Writ, because they are employed there to represent and signify the true Spiritual Church and Kingdom of the Lord; whence all the statutes and laws given them in the Levitical code, symbolize what relates to the spiritual states and experience of the regenerate man. Two things are in general involved in the observances enjoined in the Jewish ritual,—the PURIFICATION, and SPIRITUAL SUSTENANCE of the soul. Circumcision, by which the Jews were distinguished from all other Asiatic nations, and which was the rite of initiation into their church and worship, was instituted to represent the removal of depraved appetites, and sordid desires from the character, or the rejection of the concupiscences of the flesh, whereby, purification from evils is effected, and man, from being natural and carnal, is made spiritual. This is clearly indicated in the following injunction of the prophet: “Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, *and take away the foreskins of your hearts*, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, *because of the evil of your doings.**”

* Jer. iy. 4. See also Deut. x. 16.

The expiatory sacrifices were also instituted as symbols of purification; and the observances, so frequently spoken of as making an atonement, in reality involve either the idea of consecration, or of purification. The atonement made for Aaron and his sons on their inauguration into the priest's office*, that made for the altar†, and the atonement made for the Levites, when they were to be offered up to the service of the temple‡, involved consecration and dedication to the offices and uses of the tabernacle,—the ceremonial cleansing and sanctifying, preparatory to the one being employed in such uses, and to the other entering on their functions in the priesthood. The same remarks apply with equal force to the atonement prescribed for leprosy, whether in a human subject, or in a house§; likewise to the offerings enjoined for the atonement of a woman after child-birth||: the object contemplated in their institution is expressly stated to be the cleansing of the subject for whom they were made. In short, the Jewish observances, taken as a whole, embody the two leading features, of spiritual purification from evils, and spiritual sustenance by the appropriation of the heavenly prin-

* Exodus xxix. 31—33. Levit. viii. 31, to the end.

† Exodus xxix. 36, 37.

‡ Numbers viii.

§ Levit. xiii. xiv.

|| Levit. xii.

ciples of the good and the true. It is around these two points that every thing connected with the sacrificial code, and the rites and ceremonies of the Israelitish worship, revolves: hence, according to the testimony of the apostle, the observances themselves “stood in meats, and drinks, and divers washings.”*

Among the purificatory observances of the Jews, the various ablutions they were commanded to practise, have the most direct bearing on our subject. Besides those they were directed to perform on special occasions, in particular cases of uncleanness, or by reason of positive defilement; the priests were commanded, and that on pain of death, to wash their hands and their feet, whenever they went into the tabernacle of the congregation, or came near the altar “to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord†;” and that, in the case of their induction into the sacerdotal office, they should wash the whole body in water.‡

* Heb. ix. 9, 10, 13. It would be foreign to our purpose on this occasion to offer a disquisition on the object and meaning of the Jewish sacrifices, except so far as they bear on our present enquiry: those who desire to pursue the subject further, are referred to the section, *On the Atonement, Sacrifice, and Mediation of Christ, in Noble's Appeal*; to *Noble's Plenary Inspiration*, p. 490; *Madeley on the Science of Correspondences*, p. 132; *Arcana Cælestia*, vol. iii. n. 2830, and numerous other places, more particularly in vol. xi. xii.

† Exodus xxx. 18—21.

‡ Chap. xl. 12.

That the ablutions of the Jews were symbolical, is generally admitted. Indeed the whole of the Israelitish economy consisted of a comprehensive system of types, symbols, or, more correctly speaking, correspondences, wherein heavenly and divine things are representatively exhibited to the church. This is repeatedly insisted on by the apostle Paul, especially in his Epistle to the Hebrews. After describing the various parts of the tabernacle, and its furniture*, he adds that the whole was “a figure for the time then present†;” and, speaking of the whole of the Mosaic ritual, under the comprehensive term “LAW,” says that it had “a shadow to good things to come,” though it was “not the very image of those things.”‡

They were not, however, *mere* types. As the power resident in the ark of the covenant, and the stupendous phenomena manifested in its presence, according to what has already been remarked, had their origin in all things of the Jewish tabernacle and worship being arranged in the most perfect agreement with the laws of correspondence; in like manner, the observance of certain mystic rites, or representative acts, in consequence of the laws of correspondence then operating spontaneously into nature, were followed by certain specific physical results: on the other hand, the deviation

* Heb. ix. 1—7.

† Verse 9.

‡ Chap. x. 1.

from any of the representative ordinances prescribed under the Jewish dispensation, was attended with consequences of the most appalling nature. The Philistines, for instance, stayed the plague of emerods inflicted on them, and of mice with which their land was infested, by making five golden mice, and an equal number of golden emerods, to be placed in the ark for a trespass-offering.* Balaam, also, when solicited by Balak, to employ his arts of incantation against Israel, directed that seven altars should be built, and that a bullock and a ram should be offered on each.† In the trial, likewise, between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, when the Israelites agreed to accept the God that should “answer by fire‡,” and when, at the prayer of Elijah, fire descended and consumed “the sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench;” the preparations made by the prophet were in accordance with the laws on which the representatives of the Jewish Church were founded: otherwise, instead of the fire consuming

* 1 Samuel vi. 1—18. The reader will find a full explanation of what is involved in the circumstance adverted to in the text, together with the other observances attended to by the Philistines on the occasion, in *Noble's Plenary Inspiration*, p. 192; and *The Apocalypse Explained*, n. 700.

† Numbers xxiii. See also *Noble's Plen. Insp.*, p. 191.

‡ 1 Kings xviii. 21—39.

the sacrifice, some terrific catastrophe would have been the consequence. Such was actually the case on several occasions. When Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord, fire went out and devoured them.* When the Bethshemites approached the ark without observing the prescribed rules, they were smitten dead by thousands. Uzzah, also, when he unguardedly put forth his hand to stay it, experienced a similar fate. On this account, the directions given through Moses for the regulation of the priesthood, extended to the very minutiae of the sacerdotal vestments, "that when the priests went in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or went near unto the altar to minister in the holy place, they might *not bear iniquity, and die.*"† Even the enchantments of the magicians of Egypt, originated in the perversion of the knowledge they possessed of the nature of correspondences, by the application of it to magical purposes.

It is not however to be inferred, that the perfection of the ritual of representative or correspondent observances communicated to the Israelites, was of an absolute kind; the whole is rather to be considered as a temporary provision, suited to the spiritual exigences of the world at that period, till a more perfect dispensation could be established.

* Levit. x. 1, 2.

† Exodus xxviii. 43.

Its very comprehensiveness indicates the depth of the degradation into which the human mind had fallen in spiritual things. Man, having sunk below the restraints of spiritual and moral considerations, had thus severed all the internal bonds which bound him to heaven and God; and the only remaining link of the chain, was, the external communication, still possible, between earth and heaven, by virtue of worship founded on representative rites, significant of spiritual and heavenly things. Hence arose the necessity for the Mosaic code of divine symbols, and hence originated the minuteness of its details, as well as the extent it embraced; for unless such communication be maintained by some means, neither man nor the earth could continue in existence. This fact is frequently insisted on by the apostle Paul. "Wherefore, then," he asks, in writing to the Galatians, "serveth the law?" The reply is,—"*It was ADDED, because of transgressions, TILL the seed should come to whom the promise was made.*"* He enforces the same also on the Hebrews†, where he speaks of the "gifts and sacrifices" of the tabernacle, as "carnal ordinances, imposed on them UNTIL the time of reformation."

When, "in the fulness of time," the Lord, as the Great Antetype, by his assumption and glorification of the human nature, abolished all the types

* Galatians iii. 19.

† Chap. ix. 9, 10.

and symbols in which his coming had been foreshadowed, he did not sweep away representatives from the church altogether,—for the church can no more exist independently of representatives, under the Christian, than it could under the Jewish, dispensation;—but instituted two representative ordinances, in which all the types and symbols spread over the whole of the Jewish ritual, are concentrated and epitomized, and thereby rendered suitable to the genius of the Christian religion: and to shew the importance of preserving the series of representatives unbroken in the church, the Holy Supper was instituted by him whilst in the act of partaking of the passover with his disciples, whereby the symbols of the Christian and Jewish churches were interwoven and blended with each other. The two Christian sacraments, then, stand, in the Christian church, as the epitome into which are collated all the representative rites of the former dispensation:—all the ablutions, and purificatory observances, being collated into the Christian symbol of purification —BAPTISM;—and all the sacrifices, which in one word are called "*the Bread of God**," being concentrated into the Christian passover—the HOLY SUPPER.

This view places the two ordinances of the Christian religion in a new and more interesting

* Levit. xxi. 6, &c.; Mal. i. 7.

light. If it be correct that the Christian sacraments are not so much to be regarded as superseding the symbolic observances of the former dispensation, as being the concentration and epitome of them, it follows that, in addition to the rending of the mystic veil, and the "opening of a new and living way," all the benefits resulting from the symbols of the one, are preserved in the other. Properly speaking, they are *reproduced* there in a fuller and more perfect manner. The concentration in these of what was previously spread over a broad surface of ceremonial observances, adds to their potency; and this is again increased sevenfold, by the direct reference they bear to the Great Immanuel, as the direct mediums of his peculiar presence and operation in the church. It is true, the elements of the Christian sacraments do not, like the ark of old, divide rivers; lay prostrate the defences of walled cities; hurl idols, the work of human hands, from their thrones; or smite the profaner with physical death: they nevertheless do more:—to the truly penitent, they are mediums, the one of opening the gate of the church, the other, the gate of heaven.

The necessity of these representative rites in the church, may be inferred from the fact of their having been instituted by the Lord. The ground of such necessity arises out of this fundamental

law connected with the divine operations,—That every thing exists in its greatest fulness and power when in its ultimate form, or most external development; since the ultimate degree or principle of whatsoever exists, contains within it all interior things.* This is true of human, as well as of the divine, activities. The powers of both the mind and body, are, for example, in their greatest fulness, when in actual operation. Worship, which is an act of the mind or spirit, is more full, when the worshiper is in the exercise of oral prayer, than when his devotion consists in mental aspirations alone. There is an effort in every state of mental activity, in proportion to its intensity, to express itself by its appropriate bodily act, or gesture. Those acts in which both body and mind concur, are also more deeply impressed on the character, and, thereby, rendered more permanent. It is on this account that the Lord so strongly insists on the necessity of the outward life of religion, as the proper basis of its interior states, and that he compares the religion of one who is both a hearer and doer of his words, to “a house built

* The subject of degrees is fully developed in Part iii. of *the Wisdom of Angels concerning the Divine Love and Wisdom*. See also the Section in the same work, where the proposition, “That the Ultimate Degree is the Complex, Continent, and Basis of the Prior Degrees,” is demonstrated; n. 209, et sub.

on a rock," whilst the religion of those who neglect its life, is likened by him to "a house built on the sand."* It is hence that outward forms of religious worship are indispensable to the existence of the church; since, without these, religion itself would fall away, like the house built on sand, and would be dissipated, in like manner as the interior forms of the human body would be, were they not bound together by their common and specific coverings. The sacraments being the most ultimate forms of religious worship, the blessings attendant on worship are more fully experienced in them, than in any other devotional exercise. The blessing of the divine presence which is promised to all worshipers,—wheresoever even "two or three are gathered together in the name of the Lord," is then in a peculiar manner brought nigh. The opening of heaven to the soul, and the descent thence of heavenly influences, are more full. The spirit of the sincere, humble, member of the Lord's Kingdom, who is spiritually fed every Sabbath, when the Word of life is dispensed, is fed in an especial manner, whilst, as in the Holy Supper, the refection of the body also takes place, as an act of devotion,—the Christian then partaking of the symbols of the body and blood of the Lord, in obedience to the divine injunction,—"*This do in*

* Matt. vii. 24—27.

remembrance of me." An influence equally powerful attends the ordinance of Baptism; the difference being, that Baptism is the divinely appointed means of introduction into the communion of the Christian Church, whereas the Holy Supper is the medium, by which those who receive it worthily are introduced as to their spirits into heaven, being thereby incorporated more and more into Christ's mystical body, and their souls sustained with goodness and truth, which are what really constitute the body and blood of the Lord.

The sacraments may be regarded both as signs, and mediums to the church. Considered as a medium, Baptism is the means of conveying and securing a series of spiritual uses and benefits, of which the ordinance itself is the ultimate correspondent form. The first use of Baptism, and one involved in the terms of its institution by the Lord, and recognised in every age of the Christian dispensation, is, as has been already briefly hinted at, that of introduction into the Christian Church. This admission or introduction, in its external form, is the recognition of the person baptized, as belonging to the body of professing Christians among whom he has been baptized. At the time that the subject of the ordinance is thus admitted into the communion of the Lord's church on earth; by the internal use of Baptism, he is introduced, as

to his spirit, into the communion of the invisible church, or the mystical body of the Lord. In agreement with this view, we find it declared by the apostle to the Corinthians, "By one spirit are we all baptized into *one body*, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free."* He remarks, likewise, to the Galatians, "As many of you as have been *baptized into Christ*, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for *ye are all ONE* in Christ Jesus."† From these passages it is clear that an introduction is effected, by means of baptism, not only into the external, visible, Christian Church, but also as to the spirit, into communion with Christians in the unseen or spiritual world:—in other words, into the universal kingdom of the Lord, involving both the church below and the church above.

In the Articles, and Baptismal Service, of the Established Church, this is called "a grafting into the body of Christ's Church." This may in some measure be seen to be the case in adult baptism, by reason of the devotional uses resulting from it, where the subject of the ordinance intelligently takes part in the service. The difficulty,

* First Epistle, Chap. xii. 13.

† Chap. iii. 27, 28.

however, surrounding the matter, as correctly stated by Dr. Sumner, is not so much as respects the baptism of adults, but that of infants. The problem to be solved is, "Of what use baptism is in the latter case, where there is an absence of all devotional benefit to the subject?" The satisfactory solution of this problem is a subject of deep concernment to the church, not only in a theological point of view, but even more so, when it is considered in its bearing on the welfare of the children of Christian parents; for unless some definite idea of this use be made evident, many, it is to be feared, may fall into some such view as that of the Rev. J. Martineau (in the *Westminster Review*), who represents the question, as turning on the way in which "the washing of new-born babies according to certain rules, prevents God's hating them;" or come to the conclusion of a minister of the Church of England, mentioned by the same writer,—“that *the admonition of parents*, rather than any mystic operation on the child, constitutes the essence of the rite.”* Assuming that an efficacy does exist in connection with infant baptism, it follows that those who neglect the administration of the ordinance to their infant offspring, inflict on them

* See Article on the "Church of England," in the *Westminster Review*, April, 1850, p. 168, 169.

(it may be in ignorance, but they nevertheless inflict on them) a serious spiritual injury.*

It is not denied that the remarks of the apostle, quoted above, are more applicable to adults, and the benefits conferred on them by baptism; and as adult baptism would necessarily preponderate in point of numbers, in the first ages of the Christian church, it is but natural that, under these circumstances, he should, in treating of the subject, do so more in respect to its bearing on the great majority of those he addressed, who had been proselytes to Christianity, and, as such, baptized after having attained to years of maturity,—few, if any, of those living when he wrote, having been born into the Christian Church. This circumstance does not, however, afford any just argument against infant baptism, if it can be shewn that the ordinance, so administered, has a well-defined use. The idea of “*baptismal regeneration*,” especially in relation to infants, is one against which all the rational perceptions of the mind revolt. To suppose that regeneration is effected in such case, by the application of water, whether by sprinkling, or even immersion, is preposterous. The supposition, also, that an infant is, by baptism, “grafted into the body of Christ’s church,” in the same manner as one who

* See *Job Abbott*, p. 14.

is the intelligent subject of Christian influences and graces, which appears to be involved in the service of the Anglican Church, must be seen, on calm reflection, to be equally so. There must be a difference in the immediate internal results respectively experienced by infants and adults; and it may be rationally concluded, that the distinction in this respect is somewhat analagous to the difference which exists in the external use:—that is to say, that the spiritual engrafting in the case of an infant, is as distinct from that in the case of the adult, as the bare recognition of the former as belonging to the Christian community, is distinct from the actual introduction of the latter into the privileges of church communion and membership. Notwithstanding, however, this difference, there must also exist an analogy between them; since the final use of infant baptism must necessarily be similar to that contemplated in adult baptism: viz., the introduction of the infant so baptized, when he has attained to riper years, into the privileges of Christian communion; and unless it can be shewn that infant baptism more effectually accomplishes this object than adult baptism, we freely admit that its necessity and use must be given up. Whether there is a use in infant baptism, and in what that use consists, we therefore proceed to inquire.

The introduction of infants into the church, by baptism, considered in an external point of view, may be regarded as an earnest that they will be surrounded by external influences favourable to Christianity. In short, this is one of its obvious uses. The *internal* use of infant baptism, we may fairly infer to be analogous. It is a fact, abundantly testified in the Sacred Volume, that the church into which all, whether infants or adults, are thus introduced, constituting as it does the mystical Body of Christ, is not confined merely to those who are its members here. Introduction into the Christian Church, according to the apostle, involves introduction *to angels*:—"Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and *to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the First-born WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN HEAVEN,* and to the *spirits of just men made perfect*.* It is also evident, on the same authority, that the closest communion exists between the church above and the church below. The Lord's beloved disciple was privileged to witness the mingling of the worship of angels with that of men, under the symbol of incense offered from a golden censer with the prayers of the saints, by an angel standing at the

* Heb. xii. 22, 23.

golden altar which was before the throne.* So deep is the sympathy of angel-bosoms with what concerns the welfare of man, and so intimately are they affected by what passes on earth in connection with it, that the Lord declares, and emphatically repeats the declaration, that "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."† It is clear, then, that the inhabitants of the Lord's kingdom above, feel the most lively interest in all things pertaining to His kingdom here, and are associated with it in all its efforts in behalf of the salvation of the human race, whether involved in the great work of extending the boundaries of the Lord's kingdom among others, or as "ministering spirits, sent to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation‡" in the process of their individual regeneration. They are also present with, and aid the church in the worship of her members, whether in the private devotions of the closet, or when their united praises and supplications arise in the house of prayer.

Angels being thus, according to the teachings of scripture, associated with the members of the church in all their religious exercises, whether individually or collectively, it follows that they are more immediately present, and the intercommunion between them and man more full, in the

* Rev. viii. 3.

† Luke xv. 7, 10.

‡ Heb. ii. 14.

ordinances which the Lord has instituted as the ultimate, and at the same time the fullest, acts of worship. Indeed this is the very object for which the sacramental ordinances were instituted. That even infants are not beneath the care of angels, is evident from the fact that they are not beneath the care of the Lord himself, who, when on earth, said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."* More than this: from the subsequent declaration of the Divine Speaker—"For of such is the kingdom of heaven †,"—it appears, that there is a peculiar congeniality between the state of infancy and that of angels; so much so, that meetness for heaven depends on becoming as little children, and advancement in the greatness of heaven is proportioned to the growth of this child-like disposition:—"Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as a little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." ‡ From this affinity between the innocence of infancy and the innocence of heaven, the highest ministrations of that kingdom are connected with watching over, and protecting, the tender germs of the infant character:—"Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in

* Luke xviii. 16.

† Ibid.

‡ Matt. xviii. 3, 4.

heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven*;" where it is taught, in the most explicit manner, that infants are actually committed to the care of angels who hold the most exalted rank among the blessed. Whilst, then, Baptism, externally considered, is the recognition of the infant baptized as belonging to the Lord's visible church, and an earnest that it shall be surrounded with influences favourable to the growth of Christianity in after-years; internally, it is the medium whereby influences from "the church of the first-born in heaven," are brought around the spirit of the child, and thus of keeping the mind interiorly disposed towards the favourable reception of the religious instruction and training, it receives from its natural parents, or its "spiritual pastors and masters."

From this view of the subject it follows, that uses of the most important kind attend infant baptism. The only channel whereby religious influences can reach the infant mind, previous to the development of its intellectual perceptions, is from within, and consequently from those guardian angels, to whom the care of infants is committed by their heavenly Father. If then it be true, that infant baptism is the medium of bringing infants more immediately under the religious

* Matt. xviii. 10.

influences of spirits and angels who have gone from the Christian world, and of separating them from the religious influences which operate into the Gentile world, and flow from those who have departed thence, the use is as intelligible as it is important. The power of early impressions on the mind is universally recognized. Some carry this doctrine to so great a length as to maintain that the character is altogether formed by them. Though this position cannot be maintained, their influence is nevertheless undeniable. And, if the first impressions, communicated from without, through the senses, are thus fixed so deeply and permanently on the character, much more the influences that reach it from within, and consequently by a more direct way than the former,—those having to pass through the gross veil of materiality.

It might perhaps be supposed that, if the case be as stated above, the Christian rite of Baptism would be a boon to the children of Mahometan and Pagan parents, as a disposition interiorly favourable to Christian doctrine and faith would thereby be communicated. In that case, however, there would ensue an intermixture of influences injurious to the subject; the Christian influences flowing from within, would be met by the idolatrous influences from without, and the asso-

ciation of that which is sacred with that which is profane, and the consequent profanation of the interior sanctities of the Christian Religion, would be the result. It is better, therefore, that the children of such as are out of the pale of Christianity, should remain under the internal religious influences which are in accordance with their religious state and education, and suitable to the promotion of the Gentile good their religion teaches.

From the preceding observations, it is presumed, the necessity of some distinctive mark, whereby those belonging to one form of religion may be distinguished from those that belong to another, is evident. Baptism, as an introductory rite, is peculiar to the Christian Church; and was instituted by the Lord himself to supply such distinctive mark, in order that the church established by him, and founded on the acknowledgment and worship of him, might thereby be distinguished from all others. Moreover, as we have already shewn, the ordinances of the church below are participated in by the inhabitants of the Lord's kingdom above. The incense arising from worship offered in his courts here, penetrates into the sanctuary of heaven, and is mingled with the incense of angel-worshippers there. In the two ordinances instituted by the Lord, and into which all the sanctities of Christian worship are collated, as into

their appropriate ultimate forms, this intercommunion of the saints above with the saints below takes place in a fuller and more perfect manner. And, being instituted, as was just observed, for the express purpose of preserving such an intercourse between heaven and the church, they were so framed that the Lord himself, together with the inhabitants of his kingdom in both worlds, might act simultaneously in them, his church and kingdom co-operating with him in the respective uses contemplated in their establishment. We infer, accordingly, that baptism is designed to be a sign which is preceptible to angels as well as to men, indicating that the subjects of baptism, whether infants or adults, belong to the Christian Church ; so that at the time they are introduced into the church on earth they are brought under the spiritual influences proper to Christianity, and flowing from the beatified spirits of those who have departed out of the Christian world, whereby they are protected from the influence of Mahometan or Pagan spirits, who might otherwise instil a secret inclination in favour of their own religion, and thereby distort their spiritual states, and alienate them from Christianity, which would disturb and destroy spiritual order.* Infants, from the moment of their birth, are doubtless under the guar-

* *Universal Theology*, n. 678.

dianship of ministering angels, and encompassed with a sphere of heavenly protection; but this sphere is especially directed against the injury they would otherwise sustain from the kingdom of darkness. The sphere of protection which operates against the malignity of the infernals is, there can be no doubt, experienced by all infants without exception; whereas Baptism was instituted in order that a discrimination might exist, and that such as belong to the Christian Church, might be placed under the care of those guardian angels, by whose ministration they are kept in a state favourable to the receiving of faith in the Lord.

The rite of circumcision was in like manner instituted to distinguish the Jewish Church from all other contemporary Asiatic Churches, and to serve as a means of introduction into it. The apostle, in addressing the Judaizing Christians of his day, who, "to make a fair shew in the flesh and to avoid persecution," advocated circumcision in connection with Christianity*, accordingly insists, that every one who submitted to be circumcised, made himself, in consequence, a debtor to do the whole of the ceremonial law†; shewing thereby, that circumcision was both the introductory rite to all the other representative observances of Judaism, and an earnest that the person circumcised would

* Gal. vi. 12.

† Chap. v. 3.

duly observe them. But Stephen states of the law, that it was "*received by the disposition of angels.*"* The testimony of the apostle Paul is similar, who states that it was "*ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.*"† In other words, the ceremonial law, as we have previously shewn, was the medium under the Jewish dispensation of preserving a spiritual intercourse between heaven and the church.‡ Whilst, therefore, an introduction into the Jewish Church was effected by circumcision, there was an intromission, as to the spirit, of the party on whom the rite was performed, among those spirits and angels, by whom the things of the law were thus "ordained" or preserved in due order, and by whose ministration the minds of such as were circumcised, were preserved in a state favourable to the acknowledgment of the verities of the Jewish worship. On the introduction of Christianity, after the Jewish Church had come to its end, it was necessary that a new introductory rite should be divinely instituted, to distinguish it from all idolatrous churches on the one hand, and from the Jewish Church on the other. Whence, therefore, the ordinance of Baptism succeeded to that of circumcision, as the means of distinguishing Christianity from Judaism; as being also more suited to the genius of the

* Acts vii. 53.

† Gal. iii. 18.

‡ Pp. 20, 27, 28.

Christian dispensation, and the epitome of both circumcision and all the other Jewish symbols of purification; and, we may add, as applicable to both sexes, the former being applicable to males only.

The baptism of John, likewise, in addition to being the appropriate symbol of the doctrine of Repentance which he enforced, was also a medium preparatory to that of Christian Baptism, and possessed of a similar use. It is to be observed that, besides being spoken of, as the "messenger of the Lord" sent to prepare his way before him*, it is predicted of John, under the type of Elijah, that he should come, "lest the earth should be smitten with a curse." The words of the prophecy are, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."† The efficacy of the baptism of John to avert the calamity impending over the earth consisted in this:—that, as by Christian Baptism, introduction into the Christian Church, or the church founded on the acknowledgment that the Lord *had* come in the flesh, was effected; so the baptism of John was a medium whereby mankind were introduced into the Church of the Lord *then in the process of formation*, inserted amongst those who

* Mal. iii. 1; Matt. xi. 10; Mark 1, 2, &c.

† Mal. iv. 5, 6.

were in the desire, and immediate expectation of the Messiah, and thus guarded by angels against the assaults and destructive machinations of the spirits of darkness.* And when the overwhelming force their influence had acquired at the period of the incarnation, is considered, the necessity of such a provision is obvious. The demoniacs, whom the evil spirits were in the continual effort of destroying, and of making the instruments of destroying others, faintly exhibit the awful nature of the curse that would have fallen on the human race, had there not been a provision made, whereby the influence of heaven could be brought to counteract that of the opposite kingdom. Had not the legions of darkness been thus restrained, the solitary instances of such as the man among the tombs, whom no art could tame, and no fetters bind, would have been the condition of the whole human family, and men would have become the instruments of mutual destruction.† We may

* *Universal Theology*, 689.

† It may perhaps be objected, that this view, so far from being borne out, is contradicted by the passage adduced in the text above. In reply we beg to remark, that in the letter of the Word many things are spoken according to appearances. All that is evil, or injurious, in reality, has its origin in the kingdom of darkness, notwithstanding its wearing, in many instances, the appearance of being an infliction from God. The letter of the Word, in accommodation to the ideas formed on such appearances, speaks of evil as though God

remark, further, concerning the baptism of John, that, being only introductory to the ushering in of Christianity, it ceased on the full establishment of the latter, being ultimately superseded altogether by Christian Baptism*; and it is not improbable that where, in the apostle's emphatic declaration of the unity of every thing connected with the Christian Church, he affirms that there is "*one baptism †*," he may allude to some disputes in the Primitive Church respecting the validity and necessity of the baptism of John.

The uses of Baptism, so far as they consist of introduction into the Christian Church, and into a sphere of influences favourable to Christianity, flowing from the invisible world, are only preparatory to others of a more important kind. The next use of Baptism is, that the person baptized may receive instruction, whereby he may know and acknowledge the Lord, and follow him; and its final, and, at the same time, essential use is, that he may be regenerated. The importance of

were actually the author of it. To adduce one instance of this kind which occurs in the book of Job,—the narrative states, that Satan obtained permission to despoil Job of all his possessions, and that he accordingly bereaved him of his children, and deprived him of his wealth. Notwithstanding all this, in the 16th verse of the first chapter, *God* is represented as the agent,—"*the fire of God fell from heaven*," and burned up his sheep, servants, &c.

* Acts xix. 3—5.

† Eph. iv. 5.

instruction in early life is generally regarded as incontrovertible. If it is an advantage where it turns on secular things, or the natural sciences, it must evidently be a much greater blessing, where it has relation to the Lord, to heaven, and eternal felicity. Another ground which renders instruction in religious knowledge indispensable, is, that all truth has an ultimate reference to goodness, and that goodness receives from it the peculiar quality it possesses; so that without a knowledge of the Divine Head of the Christian Church, and of the truths that form genuine faith in him, that degree of goodness of which the spiritual man is the subject, or those excellences of character, known as the Christian graces, could not exist:—the capacity of becoming spiritual, or of acquiring such spiritual good, being alone imparted by the truths of Christianity. Where these are wanting, the character cannot rise above the moral virtues, such as exist among well disposed Mahometans and Pagans.

The influence the knowledge of spiritual things exerts on the Christian character being so great, the use effected by Baptism, as the means of predisposing the mind to the spiritual discernment and reception of such knowledge, is sufficiently obvious, to vindicate the Divine goodness and wisdom in giving it the sanction of Divine authority

in its institution. For although it is not to be understood, that the attainment of knowledge whereby man may be made spiritual, is impossible without this ordinance; no one, it is presumed, can regard it as a medium of bringing the mind within the operation of spiritual influences, which keep it in a state favourably disposed to the reception of religious truth, with the view to its becoming the subject of Christian faith and regeneration, and protect it against influences that might alienate it from Christianity, without being sensible that the end contemplated is sufficiently great, to justify the appointment of the means.

Some may object, that it is not possible to point out any visible or tangible difference between one who is baptized in infancy, and one who is not. It may be so. It is not denied that no *apparent* difference may be found. It does not, however, follow that no difference exists, because it is not perceptible on the surface of the character. When it is considered how short-sighted the human mind has become, and how little it is capable of penetrating beneath the exterior, in addition to which, the general tendency of education and society is to produce the concealment of the real character and sentiments under external amenities, and simulated virtues; it is quite possible that differences of vast import may exist in the inner depths

of the soul which do not become visible on the surface of the character. From all that has been said, notwithstanding any *appearances* to the contrary, it follows, that with a person baptized in infancy there is a capacity for the reception of religious truth in a deeper ground, than with one who is not,—the influences which form the first rudiments of the future Christian character, coming in the first case from within, penetrate more deeply into the mental constitution, than in the latter case. The second use of Baptism therefore arises out of the first, and is preparatory to its final use; the mind being disposed thereby to receive the instruction necessary to enable it to become the subject of faith, grounded in the acknowledgment of the Lord, and ultimately of the new birth.

Most of the difficulties which have beset this question, have arisen from confounding the rite with that which it is designed to be the medium of promoting, and which is signified by it. We have already seen, that no distinct line of demarcation has been drawn between Baptism and Regeneration, and that, as one of the necessary results, the ideas entertained on these subjects are most confused. Nevertheless, to the unsophisticated perceptions of the mind, nothing can be plainer, than that Baptism and the New Birth are perfectly distinct things. Whatever the relationship may be

in which they stand to each other, the things themselves are not to be confounded. Equally self-evident is the position, that regeneration does not, and cannot, result from the application of water ; but must depend on the use a man makes of the spiritual means within his reach. So long, therefore, as the doctrine, that regeneration is effected by Baptism, is maintained, the rational perceptions will revolt against it. Now there are many instances in Scripture, in which the term Baptism is used in a manner that would be altogether unintelligible, if the mere external rite alone were understood. When the mother of Zebedee's children, for example, besought the Lord to confer on them the distinction of sitting the one on his right hand and the other on his left, the nature of the questions he put, and the remarks with which he accompanied them, shew that, in speaking of Baptism, he did not refer to the outward ordinance : "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, *and to be baptized with the Baptism that I am baptized with?*" When they answered that they were able, he added, "Ye shall drink indeed of the cup that I drink of, *and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with,*" &c.* It is sufficiently evident that, in these observations, the Lord did not allude to baptism by water ; but

* Matt. xx. 20—23.

to a spiritual baptism he had to experience, to which all his sincere followers likewise must submit, in their degree, in imitation of him as their divine pattern, and of which he therefore speaks as future. Again, when he exclaims, "*I have a baptism to be baptized with*, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished*"; it is clear that the Baptism of which he speaks in this instance also is an internal one, and, consequently, distinct from the outward ordinance; for what straitness, adequate to call forth such an exclamation, could arise from the simple application of water? Moreover, this declaration is subsequent to his having been baptized by John, and there is no intimation of his ever being re-baptized. Most evidently then the Divine speaker, in these instances, refers to an inward process, which was symbolized by the outward rite, but not the outward rite itself. The apostle Paul, likewise, referred to this process when he penned the following striking remarks in his Epistle to the Romans: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into the likeness of his death? Therefore *we are BURIED with him by baptism INTO DEATH*; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in

* Luke xii. 50.

newness of life : *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.*”* To say, as some do who contend for the administration of Baptism by immersion, that the Christian is buried with Christ by Baptism into death *when his head is put under water*, and that, *when he lifts it out again*, he rises in the likeness of his resurrection†, really appears too puerile to be seriously refuted. To affirm also that the impressive remarks which follow,—“Knowing this, *that our old man is crucified with him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin ;” and again,—“If we be dead with Christ we believe that we shall live with him‡ ;” have reference to the immersion of the body in water, and thus in effect saying that the old man is crucified when such immersion takes place, is to shock the common sense of mankind, and to turn the whole doctrine into a subject of ridicule. The testimony of Peter agrees with this view, where he states, that Baptism does not save us “by the putting away of the filth of the flesh,” but “by the answer of a good conscience towards God.” § It follows, then, that Baptism, besides being a medium of a series of uses bearing on the new birth,

* Chap. vi. 3—5.

† Romans vi. 6, 8.

‡ See *Job Abbot*, p. 14.

§ First Epistle iii. 21.

stands also in Scripture, and in the church, as the symbol of regeneration; and that regeneration is spoken of in the Sacred Oracles under the type of Baptism. This fact, when known, explains the force and meaning of the Lord's injunction to his disciples, and the declaration accompanying it, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: *he that believeth and is baptized* shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*":—the Baptism here spoken of, referring to regeneration,—and the passage teaching, that whosoever acknowledges the Lord and is regenerated, will be saved.

Baptism not only stands in the church as a symbol of regeneration, but likewise as a memorial of the necessity there exists for man to be regenerated. For man, by natural birth, inherits, all kinds of evil propensities, or tendencies to evil; whence arises the necessity of his being born again, in order that new principles may be brought forth within him. Baptism is a memorial of this necessity, to which it points both in the whole and in detail. If we consider it as the medium whereby a series of positive uses is effected,—First, of introduction into the church, and at the same time of bringing around the young a sphere of heavenly influences; Secondly, of thereby disposing

* Mark xvi. 15, 16.

them to the favourable reception of such instruction as may lead them to the acknowledgment of the Lord as the Redeemer and Saviour, and to follow him; and thus, in the third place, of preparing the way for their Spiritual Baptism or Regeneration:—it is easy to recognize the reference which each of the preliminary uses bears to the final one. All the blessings that are *potentially* communicated in the one, are made *actual* in the other; so that, from being surrounded, through Baptism, with a circle of influences predisposing the person baptized to the acquisition of the means for developing the Christian character, he passes on, till, by regeneration, where he becomes the subject of it, there is a citizenship obtained in heaven, and an actual incorporation into, and communion with, the mystical body of Christ,—whence those influences first flowed. The uses of this ordinance thus proceed in an orderly and progressive circle, beginning from heaven and terminating there; the sphere of influences, first brought thence by its instrumentality, becoming, in the New Birth, an actual intercourse, as to the spirit, with the Church of the First-born there.

But regeneration is spoken of as being effected by means of “water” and the “Spirit,” which has led many to suppose, that in Baptism the operation of the Holy Spirit, in some mysterious way, concurs

with the operation of the water, and produces a renewing of the whole man. In entering on the investigation of passages where this doctrine is propounded, as, for example, the declaration to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God," it is obviously necessary in the outset, to enquire, what is involved in this new birth? and whether any effect produced by the application of natural water to the person is equivalent to it? otherwise, having no distinct understanding of the term, it is not possible to possess any clear apprehension of the subject. In the first place we may remark, that it is but reasonable to suppose that a real analogy exists between the two births of which man is the subject. To call that a "*new birth*" which bears no analogy to the first birth, would be a misapplication of words, calculated only to mislead the mind. It is true, man does not literally "enter a second time into the womb;" nevertheless, there must be a resemblance distinctly perceptible in the general features of the two. In the first birth, for example, there is a progressive formation; and in the new, or second birth, if it be really what the name implies, there must be a series of stages answering to those connected with man's natural birth, in that he is conceived, carried in the womb, and brought forth. The spiritual

man is not only declared to be "*born* of God *," but also to be *begotten* of God †," and to have been carried from the womb by him,—“Even to hoar hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.” ‡ Again, “As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord. Shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith the Lord. Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her; . . . that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations, that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.” § The church is here represented as a spiritual mother; the heavenly principles which grow out of her are also described as spiritual births, and their progress marked by stages similar to those which occur in natural birth.

To be born again, involves a process whereby the whole mind is actually formed and created anew. One of the difficulties connected with the declaration which affirms the necessity of being “born again of water,” arises, as we have briefly hinted before ||, from a confusion of ideas attached to the general mode of interpreting the passage where

* John i. 13.

† James i. 18; 1 Peter i. 3.

‡ Isaiah xlv. 3, 4.

§ Isaiah lxvi. 8—11.

|| See above, p. 15.

the expression occurs, in consequence of taking some of the terms in the literal, and others in a figurative sense. The genuine, or spiritual meaning of water in Baptism, and likewise in the passage under consideration, has not been attended to. The professing Christian Church has unfortunately overlooked what is involved in the declaration of the apostle, "When I was a child, I thought as a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child; *but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*"* The present state of religious knowledge gives but too plain evidence, that childish things are not yet put away. There is a clinging to sensible impressions, which can only be accounted for on the ground, that either the church has not yet outgrown, her pupilage, or else, is verging on a state of second childhood. The doating fondness for the "beggarly elements" of forms and ceremonials, but too strikingly indicates the absence of that spiritual vigour, which, "leaving the principles," is able to "go on to perfection."† Had not this been the case, the gross ideas of the ordinances of religion and of the new birth, would have been long ago repudiated, as unworthy of that spiritual discernment by which divine subjects can alone be apprehended.‡ The declaration of the Lord respecting the water, of which he says we must be

* 1 Cor. xiii. 11.

† Heb. vi. 1.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

born again, has been understood as having reference to the physical element belonging to the world of nature; whereas instances abound in the Divine Oracles, proving that the scriptural meaning of the Word is quite distinct. Witness the Lord's discourse with the Samaritan woman. Her first impressions were like "the thoughts of the child,"—formed according to the apprehension of the senses. When she was told, that if she knew the gift of God, and who it was that was then conversing with her, she would have asked, and he would have given her *living water*, her thoughts were not raised above sensible objects, and she answered accordingly: "Sir," was her reply, "thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou that living water?" The Lord answered, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but it shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life."* It is a subject calculated to excite both grief and wonder, that theology is still where the Lord found the woman of Samaria,—forming its conclusions according to the appearances presented by the senses. What can be plainer than that, by the "living water" promised to this woman, the Lord meant

* John iv. 9—14.

the knowledge concerning himself—the truths that teach his character and his divinity, and which alone can satisfy the immortal longings of the soul after intelligence? When he speaks of himself as the fountain at which this thirst is to be slaked,—when, as in the last great day of the feast, he cried, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; he that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water* ;” and when, too, Jehovah calls himself “The Fountain of living Waters† ;”—blind indeed must be the intellectual vision of those who cannot see that, in these instances, water has a meaning distinct from that of the letter. The spiritual signification of water is TRUTH,—a signification so obvious to the mind, when it exercises reflection, that scarcely any thing is more common than to speak of the Divine Oracles as *a well*, and to designate the instruction communicated by them as streams and rivers of water. In fact the Bible itself supplies the meaning:—“*The earth shall be full of THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD, as the WATERS COVER THE SEA.*” ‡ The internal acknowledgment of the Lord, is “a well of water” within the mind, “springing up unto everlasting life”—a perennial source of intelligence and felicity. Jehovah, as the Divine Truth itself—the infinite

* John vii. 37, 38.

† Jer. ii. 13.

‡ Is. xi. 9.

source of all knowledge and instruction, is the "Fountain of living Waters;" and the Lord also, when he cries unto all who thirst to come to him and drink, identifies himself with that Divine Fountain.

When it is seen that by water, as just explained, is spiritually signified truth, and that by being "*born of water*," is meant, being formed anew through the instrumentality of truth, the difficulty vanishes; and the interpretation of the passage—"Except a man be born of water he cannot see the kingdom of God," is placed on an intelligible basis, since it teaches, that without truth as a means, it is impossible for regeneration to take place,—in other words, for man to be made spiritual. Truth is the spiritual formative principle, and not only gives shape and colour to the thoughts, but is likewise indispensable in the formation of the character. Every thing that is true, in either a moral or religious sense, is the form of some moral virtue or Christian grace; whence, as previously shewn, it is truth which gives to goodness its distinctive properties.

The word rendered "spirit," in a clause of the passage partially quoted in the preceding paragraph, and where also the spirit is described as an agent in the new-birth, is, in other parts of the

chapter where it occurs, rendered *wind**: "The *wind* bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one that is born (according to the literal rendering) of *the wind*."† *Water*, as shewn above, is the symbol of *truth*; *wind* or *breath*, in consequence of the presence of animal life being indicated by respiration, is taken in the Scriptures to symbolize *life*; and every order of sentient life, whether physical or mental, natural or spiritual, is included under the term, as used in the letter of the Word. We find it employed in relation to Deity‡, to indicate that he is the self-existent source of all being, certainly not to represent him as an unsubstantial extension; and the communication of life to the soul, by influx from the Divine life, is spoken of, as "*God breathing into man's nostrils the breath of life*, and man becoming a living soul."§ We have another striking instance of this signification of wind, in connection with Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones.|| After the prophet had been commanded to prophesy to the dry bones, and bone had come to its bone, had

* See above, p. 15.

† John iii. 8.

‡ John iv. 24, where it reads, in the authorized version, "God is a Spirit."

§ Gen. ii. 7.

|| Ezek. xxxvii. 9, 10.

next been covered with sinews, these succeeded by flesh, and the whole clothed with skin; he was further commanded to prophesy to the *wind*:—
“*Prophesy unto the WIND; prophesy, son of man, and say to the WIND, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O BREATH, and breathe upon these slain, THAT THEY MAY LIVE.*” The prophet continues, “So I prophesied, as he commanded me, *and the breath came into them, and they lived.*” To be *born* of the wind, or Spirit, then, obviously signifies, *to become the subject of a renewed LIFE*; and the two expressions—“born again of water, and of the Spirit”—taken together, indicate that the new-birth can only be effected by the truths appertaining to a living faith, and a life in agreement with them:—in other words, that the new-birth involves a twofold operation, the first consisting in the discovery of evils by means of the truths of holy writ, accompanied by self-compulsion, through power derived from God, in resisting them, and thereby effecting the reformation of the character; and the second, consisting in a person becoming the subject of spiritual life, or of a new animating principle breathed into the soul from the Lord, which properly constitutes regeneration. Reformation, being chiefly effected through the instrumentality of truth, or the understanding, is indicated by being “born again of *water* ;” and re-

generation, consisting of a new life breathed into the man, is indicated by being “born again of the Spirit.” John the Baptist also describes this twofold process connected with the new-birth, where he says, “*I indeed baptize you WITH WATER unto repentance ; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear : he shall baptize you with the HOLY SPIRIT and with FIRE.*” * Reformation involving, also, the shunning of evils as sins in the sight of God, or repentance, John speaks of this first stage of the new-birth as being represented in his baptism ; and the second stage, in which the regenerating person is imbued with a new vital animating principle, is described as an interior baptism—the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. That this second baptism consists in the reception of a new principle of life breathed into the new man when it is formed, or rather *re*-formed, is evident from the Lord’s communicating the Holy Spirit to his disciples by the act of breathing on them :—“*he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.*” † That the apostles, when speaking of “the Spirit,” mean thereby this new life, is evident from the manner in which they refer to it. It is spoken of as an indwelling principle in each individual bosom ; as, for instance, “Ye are not in the flesh but in the spirit, *if so be*

* Matt. iii. 11.

† John xx. 22.

that the Spirit of God DWELL IN YOU ; Now if any man have NOT THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, he is none of his :*" and likewise as the spirit, or principle animating the whole church, or mystical body of Christ. It is to this indwelling principle the apostle refers in the following passages :—" There is *one body, and ONE SPIRIT*† ;" " Endeavour to keep the *unity of the spirit* in the bond of peace‡ ;" " We both [viz. Jews and Gentiles] have access by *one spirit* unto the Father." § This receives further illustration from the First Epistle to the Corinthians ||, where the apostle speaks of their having " all DRUNK *unto one spirit.*" The whole passage is very striking :—" By *one spirit* are we all baptized into *one body*, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free ; and have been *all made TO DRINK INTO ONE SPIRIT.*"

This is still more forcible, when taken in connection with the context, where the church is considered as one body, composed of many members, yet nevertheless animated by one life—the life imparted from the glorified person of Christ. The Saviour's invitation to all those who *thirsted*, to go to him *to drink*, and the promise to whomsoever should believe on him, that " out of his belly should flow rivers of living water," refers to this Spirit,

* Rom. viii. 9.

† Eph. iv. 4.

‡ Ver. 3.

§ Chap. ii. 18.

|| Chap. xii. 13.

for it is expressly added, that “he spake this of that Spirit which they who believed on him should receive.”* The baptism of the Spirit, then, is that phase of the new-birth which relates to the impartation of a renewed life, or, as designated by the apostle Paul, “the renewing of the spirit of the mind.”† The whole passage, indeed, contains such a lucid exposition of the nature of regeneration, that it is adduced:—“Ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard of him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and *be renewed in the spirit of your mind*; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”‡ In the declaration of John the Baptist we have quoted, it is said that the Lord shall “baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”§ Two terms are here used, to mark the twofold character of the life imparted by regeneration; the Holy Spirit, which is on some occasions called “*the Spirit of Truth* ||,” denoting the *life of truth, and fire, the life of love*. ¶

Baptism further stands as the representative of

* John vii. 39.

† Eph. iv. 23.

‡ Ver. 20—24.

§ Matt. iii. 11.

|| John xiv. 17.

¶ Arcana Cœlestia, n. 9818. See also Clowes' *Matthew's Gospel*, in loco.

Regeneration, considered as the means of spiritual purification. The word itself signifies washing, and the ordinance of baptism, being used by Divine command, symbolizes *spiritual washing*, or the inward purification of the thoughts and affections. The instances in which spiritual purification is spoken of in the Scriptures, as washing, are so beautiful, that although somewhat numerous, I cannot forbear quoting the majority of them. David exclaims, "*I will wash my hands in innocency*, and so will I compass thine altar, O Lord*;" again, "*Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin* Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean ; *wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*"† In Jeremiah it is written, "*O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness*, that thou mayest be saved.‡" In the book of Isaiah we have the following striking illustration of the reference the Scripture meaning of "washing," has to this inward purification : "*Wash you, make you clean ; PUT AWAY THE EVIL OF YOUR DOINGS FROM before mine eyes : cease to do evil ; learn to do well ; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*" § The symbolic character of the ablu-

* Ps. xxvi. 6.

† Ps. li. 2, 7.

‡ Chap. iv. 14.

§ Chap. i. 16—18.

tions prescribed in the Jewish law, has already been hinted at.* The narrative of Naaman's leprosy, and its cure †, is equally significant. It would be profanity to affirm, that the sending of Naaman to dip himself seven times in Jordan was a mere caprice of the prophet : and, if not caprice, it must rest on some tangible ground. In fact, the whole narrative points so obviously to the purification of the heart from the leprosy of sin, by means of spiritual washing ; and the objection of the Syrian to a remedy so simple, presents in such a striking light the repugnance of the unrenewed mind to humble itself to the mode of purification prescribed in the Gospel ; that it is difficult not to recognize the spiritual lesson couched beneath it. There is, again, the Lord's act of washing his disciples' feet ‡, the significant character of which is sufficiently indicated by the question,—“ Know ye what I have done to you ? ” and the application which follows,—“ If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet ; ye ought also to wash one another's feet. ” § What renders the significance of the act more striking, when Peter protested against the Lord's washing his feet, the answer was, “ *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me* || ; ” and when Peter, after hearing this, said,

* P. 25.

† 2 Kings v.

‡ John xiii.

§ Ver. 14.

|| Ver. 8.

“Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head,” the reply was, “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.”* Nothing can well be more distinct and clear, than the reference this act of the Lord bears to the purification of the internal character by means of truth:—water being the symbol of truth, and washing of purification thereby. The epistolary writings furnish instances equally to the point. In writing to the Hebrews, the apostle says, “Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, *having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*”† To the Corinthians, “*But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord.*”‡ In his eloquent description of what Christ has done for his church, which occurs in his Epistle to the Ephesians, where he enforces tenderness on the part of the husband towards the wife, the apostle says, “Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, *that he might sanctify, and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the Word,* that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and with-

* Ver. 10.

† Chap. x. 22.

‡ First Epistle vi. 11.

out blemish.”* It needs no observations to prove what is so evident,—that the washing mentioned in this quotation, is spiritual washing. This is plain, indeed, from its being described as the object the Divine Bridegroom had in view when he gave himself for the church. When writing to Titus, the apostle speaks of this washing as the “washing of regeneration :”—“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”† In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, likewise, it is written, “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, *let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit*, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”‡ The apostle Peter also declares, that baptism “saves us, *not by the putting away of the filth of the flesh*, but the answer of a good conscience to God.”§

It is somewhat surprising that the spiritual signification of washing, and its bearing on Baptism, as the symbol of inward purification in the new-birth, should, to so great an extent, have been overlooked, when the whole of the Lord’s teaching goes to shew, that the Christian religion is essentially internal in its character and operations; and only

* Eph. v. 25—27.

† Chap. iii. 5.

‡ Chap. vii. 1.

§ First Epis. iii. 21.

so far external as is necessary for the existence and fulness of the internal. The declaration that “not that which goeth in at the mouth defileth the man, *but that which cometh from within,*” has been previously noticed.* His very kingdom is an internal one—“*The kingdom of God is within you.*”† The denunciations against the pharisees, were on account of *their cleansing merely THE OUTSIDE of the cup and platter, whilst WITHIN they were filled with all kinds of defilement*: the injunction is added, “*cleanse FIRST that which is WITHIN the cup and the platter, that the OUTSIDE may be clean also.*”‡ From these quotations it is also evident, that the invitation of Ananias to the apostle Paul, “*Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins§,*” does not, when rightly considered, favour the idea of baptismal regeneration,—in other words, that the water, or aught else, in the mere rite of baptism can remove sins; since the washing of the Christian is an internal washing,—a cleansing of those parts of the man that water cannot reach. But baptism, symbolizing, and indeed standing as a perpetual memorial of, regeneration, in the church, is frequently used in a sense comprising regeneration. The injunction of Ananias, therefore, included both the introductory rite, and the

* P. 14.

† Luke xvii. 21.

‡ Matt. xxiii. 25, 26.

§ Acts xxii. 16.

process of which the external ordinance is the representative,—the new-birth, which can alone be effected by shunning evils as sins in the sight of God, and “the inward renewing of the spirit of the mind.”

In some parts of the sacred volume, also, we read of being washed with the blood of Christ,—a doctrine, it is true, bearing on Baptism in an indirect manner only; but which, from its reference to spiritual purification, may, nevertheless, justify a brief digression. Whatever is involved in it, its import is evidently spiritual, not literal. If the literal sense be claimed for “*blood*,” or a natural idea attached to the word, it is undeniable that the “*washing*” is mystical, and that it involves interior purification. Now the medium of spiritual purification, is the divine truth communicated through the Word of God, or the Scriptures. We accordingly read of the Lord, that, in one place, he said of his disciples, “*Sanctify them through thy truth**;” again, of himself as their great exemplar, “*For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth*†;” and, in another place, “*Now are ye clean through the WORD which I have spoken unto you*‡:” and to shew the connection between the two, he adds to a declaration previously

* John xvii. 17.

† Ver. 19.

‡ Chap. xv. 3.

quoted, "THY WORD IS TRUTH."* Both water and blood are symbols of the divine truth, and were used as such under the representative worship of the Jews; the former as the type of truth in its lowest or ultimate form, and the latter as the type of the interior, living truth. The "blood of Christ," that is of his glorified, or deified body, is the divine truth itself; and the reception of it effects both purification from spiritual defilement, and imparts spiritual life: whence it is written, that "the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin†;" and that "whosoever drinketh thereof has eternal life."‡

Another result arising from the present unsatis-

* Chap. xvii. 17.

† 1 John i. 7.

‡ John vi. 54. The passage referred to in the text, reads as follows:—"Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life." To enter fully on the subject propounded in this passage, would lead to the investigation of the nature and meaning of the Holy Supper. Suffice it, therefore, to remark, that the Lord, by glorification, made his humanity the divine good and the divine truth. By the former, which is spoken of as his flesh, man's will and its life are sustained; and by the latter, which is called his blood, his understanding and the life appertaining to it are supported. The bread and wine in the sacrament, are the symbols of these two; and, according to the laws of correspondence, which we have briefly adverted to, whilst man, as to his body, partakes of the natural elements of that divine ordinance, his spirit is actually fed with the "body and blood" of the Lord's Humanity—or with those things that constitute them,—the divine goodness and truth.

factory state of knowledge in the professing church respecting the ordinance of Baptism, its meaning, and uses, is, that theologians have been divided on questions of the most external nature, such, for instance, as the respective claims of sprinkling and immersion:—whether, for example, it is sufficient, in the administration of the ordinance, that the water be sprinkled, or poured, on the party baptized, or, whether it is essential to the validity of the rite, to plunge the whole person under water. This is only an illustration of the fulfilment of that prophetic declaration, which says, “Wheresoever the carcase is, thither will the eagles be gathered together*.” in other words,—when the essence of a religious ordinance is lost sight of, the church begins to dispute about the form: whereas, on the other hand, if the church possessed a distinct perception of the genuine use and meaning of the symbols appointed by the Lord, the mode of their administration would be regarded as comparatively unessential. It would then be seen, that sprinkling equally represents regeneration, and consequent purification, as does immersion, as is evident from the following passage in Ezekiel,—“*Then will I SPRINKLE clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from ALL your filthiness†;*” and from the expression which occurs in a passage already quoted

* Matt. xxiv. 28.

† Chap. xxxvi. 25.

from the apostle Paul,—“ *Having our hearts SPRINKLED from an evil conscience.*”*

From what has been advanced it is plain, that water is used in baptism as a symbol of the truths of faith; and that baptism itself was instituted to be the representative of spiritual washing, that it might stand in the church as a memorial of regeneration, and of the purification from evils and false principles effected by regeneration. In another point of view, baptism symbolizes temptations. This signification of the ordinance arises from the circumstance, that all regeneration is effected by means of temptations†, and, because baptism represents the new-birth under all its phases, and, consequently, all that is included in it, whether considered in reference to the reformation of the outward man, or the “inward renewing of the spirit of the mind.” This explains why, in speaking of his own temptations, and those of his disciples, the Lord designates them a baptism: “Can ye drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and *be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?* Ye shall indeed drink of my cup, and *be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with*‡;”—“*I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.*” § In what may

* Heb. x. 22.

† Arcana Cœlestia, n. 10,239.

‡ Matt. xx. 22, 23.

§ Luke xii 50.

be termed the supreme sense, that is, when spoken of in reference to the Lord, baptism denotes his glorification, or the whole process whereby his humanity was made divine, including his conflicts with the powers of darkness even to his final temptation, or the passion of the cross, which was the crowning act, whereby he fully accomplished the great work of "leading captivity captive" and glorifying his human. The regeneration of man is an image of the Lord's glorification, and the result of regeneration is, to transform the Christian into the image and likeness of the MAN CHRIST, or of the Lord's glorified nature.* On what other intelligible ground could the Lord speak of this rite, as he spoke of it to John, when he said, in reference to his own baptism,—"*Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil ALL righteousness†?*" It could be for no other reason, than that grounded in its spiritual significance as the type of all that relates to the regeneration of man and the glorification of himself. The observations of the apostle Paul to the Romans on baptism, which have been previously quoted, also connect with it the crucifying of the old man, and, of course, the temptations involved therein, in a manner that would be unintelligible, except baptism be recognized as the representative of such

* Rom. viii. 29; Eph. iv. 13.

† Matt. iii. 15.

spiritual crucifixion, or temptations:—"Know ye not, *that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, WERE BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: . . . that, like as Christ was raised from the dead, . . . even so we should walk in newness of life.* For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, *that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, that we should no more serve sin.*"* This appears even plainer from the context. The chapter commences with the question,—*"Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound†?"* To this the apostle replies, by asking, *"How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein‡?"* and then, in the subsequent verses, which have been adduced just above, refers his readers to baptism, in a manner that would be utterly meaningless, unless it be regarded in the church as both the representative and memorial of regeneration, and all that pertains to it. The question, *"Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?"* &c., intended, as it is, to remind the Roman Christians, that they were to hold themselves to be *"dead unto sin, but alive unto God;"*

* Romans vi. 3—6.

† Ver. 1.

‡ Ver. 2.

that they were not to let "sin reign in their mortal bodies to fulfil the lusts thereof, neither to yield their members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but to yield themselves unto God as those that were alive from the dead*;" plainly shews that it was so recognized in the apostolic age: wherefore it is here put as typically involving the whole of the new-birth, or that process whereby the old man, together with its lusts, being crucified, becomes dead to sin, and the Christian is resuscitated into newness of life.

There are some who appear to hold the idea, that a degree of sanctity, in some way or other, attaches to the water that is used in the ordinance. This also is one of the results growing out of the present imperfect state of knowledge in the church on the subject. Whenever the interior spiritual uses of a religious service are lost sight of, the religious feelings become concentrated in the external rite. Such being the case, as respects baptism, the real ground of its sanctity is not seen. Instead of being recognized as the outward symbol, or representative of regeneration, and holy by virtue of the heavenly and divine things involved in such representation; it is, by many, confounded with that of which it is only the type, and held to be identical, or nearly so, with the

* Ver. 11—13.

new-birth; whence also it is regarded as having some intrinsic holiness, and the water itself as the depository of some mysterious latent sanctity. It is, nevertheless, one would suppose, sufficiently evident, at least to those who give themselves the trouble to exercise reflection, that no inanimate thing can be the subject of sanctity, and that no form of consecration can make it so. Whatever sanctity may exist in connection with any of the services of the church, it has its residence in the human breast, which, so far as man becomes the subject of regeneration, is transformed into a living temple of the Most High. It is not that water is the seat of any Christian influence or grace, or that it can be made to impart any, that its use is ordained in baptism; but simply to supply to the ideas of those present an ultimate symbol, and thus to impart to the representation connected with this ordinance of introduction into the Christian church, an actuality, and consequent fulness: whereas without it the representation would have no actual, but only an imaginary basis.*

* The necessity of such an actual symbol or representative as that supplied by the water in baptism, arises from the nature of the laws which regulate the intercommunion between the church below and the "church in the skies," or, as we have called them in the text, the laws of correspondence. The organization of angels, not being *material*, is no more adapted to take cognizance of the things of this world, than

Among the subjects connected with this sacrament, the formula prescribed by its Divine Founder demands our notice. The Lord directed that

are the physical organs of our earthly body suited to take cognizance of the things of theirs. The medium through which the inhabitants of that world become acquainted with what passes in this, is the mental part of man, that is to say, it is reflected from the thoughts of those on whom they are attendant as ministering spirits: so that they only become acquainted with what occurs within the church, through the minds of those who constitute the church, and take part in its worship. Moreover, the intellectual plane of angelic ideas incalculably transcends that of mortals below. The things heard by the apostle, when he was caught up into paradise (2 Cor. xii. 1—4), so far transcended human thought, that he could not find language to give them utterance. In short, the ideas of angels are essentially spiritual, whilst those of men are natural; but, by virtue of the correspondence, or analogy, which exists between what is spiritual and what is natural, the natural ideas inseparable from man's state here, are transmuted into spiritual ideas as they pass on to angelic intelligences; so that what is seen after a natural manner by the one, is perceived after a spiritual mode by the other. It has been proved, it is presumed satisfactorily to those who have candidly examined the subject, that a communion with heaven actually existed in the Jewish Church, by virtue of the symbolical observances prescribed in the law, since it has been shewn on the plain statement of Scripture that such was the case. It is not, however, to be supposed, that the angels, by whose "disposition," or ministry, the law was "ordained," were in the least interested in the outward, carnal ordinances of the Jewish worship, consisting as they did "in meats and drinks, and diverse washings;" in the shape and fashion of the priests' garments, and other matters of a similar nature. Indeed the apostle states (2 Cor. iii.) that the Jews might themselves have seen much further into the nature and meaning of their observances than they did, had not "their hearts been

baptism should be performed "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." The significance of *name*, in Scripture, is very striking; and a right understanding of this subject will greatly assist in elucidating the nature of baptism. Names, as they occur in Holy Writ, indicate *qualities*. The divine names found there, are obviously expressive of the divine characters and qualities. The name JEHOVAH, formed as it is from the verb of existence, presents the Most High, as essential, underived Being. Again, the names GOD, ALMIGHTY, CREATOR, FORMER, REDEEMER, FATHER OF ETERNITY, WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR,

so blinded," that even Moses was obliged to put a veil over his face. What the Jews saw after a natural manner, the angels saw spiritually; the ideas of the former being transmuted into what is spiritual, when seen by the latter as they were reflected thence. So that what they saw in them was the heavenly and divine things to which their symbols referred, the external symbol serving to fix the mind of the worshiper in some thing thus actually presented to the senses, which could form the basis of the spiritual idea. The water serves a similar purpose in that Christian sacrament, into which the Jewish symbols relating to purification are collated and epitomized. Whilst it presents an actual type or representative before the senses, and thus fixes the thought, it is perceived in the church of the first-born after a spiritual manner, being seen there in its reference to regeneration, and thus as a sign that the child baptized is to be regenerated. See *Universal Theology*, n. 685. More may be seen on this subject in the *Arc. Cæl.*, in connection with sacrifices. Professor Bush has also illustrated how natural ideas are transmuted into spiritual, in his "*Reasons*," &c., to which the reader is referred.

&c., carry on the face of them their meaning and force. In addition to these, we have the positive testimony of the Scripture, in such passages as the following: "Thus saith the High and Lofty One, whose *name is HOLY**;" where, also, it is said of him whom John saw riding on the white horse, that "he had a *NAME written which no man knew, but he himself†*;" also, that "He hath on his vesture and on his thigh *a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.‡*" Moreover, the quality of the church is indicated by name; for example: "Thou hast a *name* that thou livest, and art dead."§ The new quality acquired by regeneration is described, by its being said, "Thou shalt be called by a *new NAME which the mouth of the Lord shall NAME. . . . Thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah [My delight is in her] and thy land, Beulah [Married]: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.*"|| In the Revelation, it is declared to the Philadelphians, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God . . . and *I will write upon him the NAME of my God, and the NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him MY NEW NAME.*"¶ There is also the significant

* Isaiah lvii. 15.

† Rev. xix. 12.

‡ Ver. 16.

§ Chap. iii. 1.

‡ Is. lxii. 2, 4.

¶ Rev. iii. 12. See also chap. ii. 17.

fact that, when the Lord called Abram to be the father of many nations, he changed his name, by the addition of a letter taken from the divine name of Jehovah, into *Abraham*. To Jacob likewise was given, on a memorable occasion, the name of *Israel*,—this being formed from the original of the name, God. From all that has been adduced, then, it is evident, that when, at the institution of the Christian sacrament of introduction into the church, the Lord directed his disciples to baptize “IN,” or, more correctly and expressively rendered, “INTO” *the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit*; the name most clearly refers to the quality involved in regeneration, and imparted from the Lord by its instrumentality—Baptism, as abundantly shewn, standing as its representative or symbol in the church.

One circumstance, however, demanding our attention, is, that although the Lord enjoined his disciples to baptize into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, nevertheless, from the few instances mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, it appears that their practice was, to baptize into the name of the Lord alone.* Peter, on the day of

* The author is aware, that what is involved in the disciples' baptizing in the name of the Lord, and what is to be understood by it, has been a disputed point in the church. It would, however, be entirely beside his object, to enter into the merits of that discussion in this pamphlet. Suffice it to observe, that very early authorities

Pentecost, urged those whom he addressed, to repent and be baptized, every one of them, *in the name of the Lord Jesus**;" the Samaritans were also baptized into the same name†; Peter likewise commanded the household of Cornelius to be baptized *in the name of the Lord‡*; and Paul directed that the Ephesian converts should be baptized *into the name of the Lord Jesus.§* It is worthy of remark, that the name used by the apostles when baptizing, is one that does not occur in the formula given by the Lord: he enjoined the use of the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; whereas they used, instead, the name Lord, or Lord Jesus,—a name which, it appears, was held by them to be equivalent to those particularized by the Lord at the institution of the ordinance. The ground of this is, because the name JESUS, is that of God in his manifestation in the flesh||—or, as the Immanuel, God WITH US¶—in other words, because Jesus is the name of that nature, in which "*all the fulness of*

hold the view we have taken; and, for the rest, the reader is recommended to form his own judgment, on the evidences he will find in the text.

* Acts ii. 38.

† Chap. viii. 16.

‡ Chap. x. 48.

§ Chap. xix. 5.

|| See 1 Tim. iii. 16. "Great is the mystery of Godliness, God was manifest in the flesh," &c.

¶ Matt. i. 22, 23: where this name is applied by the Evangelist to the Lord's human nature.

the Godhead dwells bodily.”* Therefore the name of Jesus is declared to be “above every name,—that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.”† This view is confirmed by the testimony of the apostles, especially that of the apostle Paul, who, when adverting to the subject of baptism, emphatically declares it to be, a baptism, not merely into the *name* of Christ, but actually *into* Christ, and to involve likewise the putting on of Christ:—“As many of you,” he says, “as have been *baptized into Christ*, have *put on Christ* ‡:”—where, by the putting on of Christ, is meant, the putting on, by regeneration, of which as we have seen baptism is the type and memorial, a new nature, from the glorified human nature of the Lord, wherein the distinctions of country and race are lost in Christian brotherhood,—where “there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free.”§ This putting on of Christ, or becoming the subject of a regenerated nature from him, is sometimes called, “the putting on of the *new man* ||,” and, at others, this new nature is called, “the new creature ¶;” whilst the unregenerated nature, or

* Col. ii. 9.

† Phil. ii. 9, 10.

‡ Gal. iii. 27.

§ Gal. iii. 28.

|| Eph. iv. 24.

¶ 2 Cor. v. 17 ; Gal. vi. 15.

humanity is called, "the old man."* In every instance, this new nature is referred to Christ, as its source; whence he is declared to be, "the HEAD *over ALL things to the church*†," "from whom the whole body maketh increase unto the edifying of itself in love‡;" or, as, if possible, more forcibly put in his Epistle to the Colossians, where the Lord is called, "the head, by which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment administered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." Passages bearing on this subject abound throughout the writings of the apostle Paul. We select some of the most striking: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; *yet not I, but CHRIST LIVETH IN ME.*"§ "Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: *but CHRIST is ALL, and IN all.*"|| In a quotation which occurs just above, Christ is spoken of as "the head from which all the body increaseth *with the increase of God*;" in another of his Epistles¶, he declares that "ALL THINGS are

* Rom. vi. 6; Eph. iv. 22, &c.

† Eph. i. 22.

‡ Chap. iv. 16.

§ Gal. ii. 20.

|| Col. iii. 9—11.

¶ 2 Cor. v. 18.

of God," and this, notwithstanding his having stated in another quotation, that "CHRIST is all, and in all;" but then he explains this, by adding that "*God was IN Christ**," meaning thereby, that the "manhood" of Christ was actually "taken into God†," as is evident from his defining the indwelling of divinity in the Lord's person, as the indwelling of "ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD IN HIM BODILY." He moreover places this doctrine of the supreme and exclusive divinity of Christ, at the head of what he states to the Colossians respecting baptism. His words are, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: *rooted and built up in HIM*, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.* And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein ye are risen with him through faith of the operation

* 2 Cor. v. 18.

† Athan. Creed.

of God (*i. e.* Christ's indwelling divinity) who hath raised him from the dead."*

There cannot, then, we should suppose, remain any doubt about the sense in which the Apostles are said to have baptized in the name of the Lord, or the Lord Jesus. Being the name of that nature, wherein the whole fulness of the Godhead has its bodily residence, and by which it is present with men,—which is, moreover, the source of the new nature or humanity received by the new-birth;—it was held by them to be equivalent to the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; since, whatever is to be understood by these, must be included in the name Jesus, which is the appellation of that nature where the whole of the divine fulness dwells; and employed by them in the formula of baptism, as, probably, most suitable to direct the minds of the early Christian converts to the fact so emphatically insisted on, that putting on the Christian character, which they engaged to do at baptism, was putting on Christ, his humanity being the source whence the *new man* was communicated; so that he being the Author and Finisher of their faith, the Alpha and Omega of all Christian perfection, was to be their all and in all, of faith, love, and worship. It is further, a significant circumstance, that notwith-

* Col. ii. 6—12.

standing the Lord's injunction to baptize into the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit, he does so on the very ground of his humanity having, by glorification, become the seat of the divine attributes: "*All power,*" he says, "*is GIVEN unto ME in heaven and in earth*;*" and immediately adds, "*Go ye, THEREFORE, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*" "All power," is the Divine attribute of omnipotence. This, as the words, "*given unto me,*" imply, was communicated to something that did not possess it previous to such communication. That "something" was the Humanity, which has become the seat of all the perfections of Deity, by virtue of its perfect union, and identity thence resulting, with the Divine Essence; so that the Divine and the Human exist in the glorious person of Christ, infinitely more closely united than the soul and body of man,—the Human, being the only medium, whereby man has access to the Divine, and whence he receives the blessings of redemption and salvation.†

* Matt. xxviii. 18.

† That the Lord's human nature became, by its glorification and consequent union with the divine essence, the seat of the divine attributes, is demonstrable from numerous passages of Holy Writ. The passage quoted above in the text affirms the truth of this in regard to omnipotence. He claims the divine attribute of eternity,

The force and meaning of the name, Jesus, when used by the apostles in the baptism of Christian converts, as indicating the new quality received from the Lord's humanity by the new-birth, of which the ordinance was instituted to be the type and memorial; are now, it is presumed, sufficiently apparent. It may, however, be necessary to add a word or two on the meaning involved in the injunction of the Lord. It is unnecessary to repeat what has been advanced in illustration of the plenary nature of the indwelling of the divinity in the Lord's person, except merely to remark, that we have already shewn that, whatever is meant by the Father, Son, and Spirit, they must be inseparable from, and dwell within him, in

where he declares, "Before Abraham *was*, I AM" (John vi. 58); also, in the promise, "Whosoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there AM I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20); and likewise in the following—"Lo, I AM with you always even to the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20). In the two passages last quoted he claims both eternity and omnipresence. Omniscience is ascribed to him by Peter (John xxi. 17), "Thou, Lord, knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee;" and claimed by him in his address to the church of Thyatira, where it is written (Rev. ii. 18, 23), "These things saith the *Son of God* *All the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts.*" For a fuller investigation of the subject of the Lord's divinity, the reader is referred to *Hindmarsh's Letters to Dr. Priestley*; and *Seal upon the Lips*; *Clowes's Reply to the Abbé Barruel*; *Noble's Appeal*; *Clissold's End of the Church*, &c.

whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead. We have also explained, that the Holy Spirit is nothing more than the effluent life proceeding from the Lord's glorified person, having been breathed by him on his disciples, and being still breathed into every regenerated Christian, and constituting that *life* of which the apostle speaks to the Galatians, where he says, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; *yet not I, but CHRIST LIVETH IN ME.*"* As regards the Father, the Lord invariably describes him as dwelling in himself:—"The Father that dwelleth in me †"—is a declaration emphatically enforced by him on more than one occasion. To those who have been in the habit of thinking of the three names found in the formula of baptism, as applying to three divine personalities, and of speaking of three persons in the Godhead, the following important scriptural fact is suggested for their candid consideration:—that it is no where stated in the Bible that there are persons, or even a single person, existing *in* the the Godhead; but that, on the other hand, it is, in a very precise and emphatic manner declared, that the Godhead exists *IN one person* (not the person in

* Chap. ii. 20.

† John xiv. 10. See the whole of the Lord's reply to Philip's request, "Lord, shew us the Father and it sufficeth;" verses 8—10.

the Godhead), and that that person is Jesus CHRIST. Another expressive fact is, that although the Lord commands to baptize in three, the *name* is one: He does not say the *names*, but the *name* of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shewing thereby that the three constituted but one Divine name or quality. The Trinity, then, existing as it does, according to the testimony of the apostle, in the single person of the Lord, consists of the Divine Essence, the Divine Form, and the Divine Proceeding; no other Trinity could exist in one person. The inmost Divine Essence, or, if the expression may be allowed, the inmost ground of the Divine Being, is LOVE*; the Divine Form or manifestation is WISDOM, the LOGOS or WORD; and the Divine Proceeding is the effluent life, operating into the Christian the virtues and graces of spiritual life.† The image of God, which man lost by the fall, is restored by the new-birth, for “the new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him‡;” and the Christian only attains, in his degree, “to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, as the Divine qualities, or perfections which center in his Divine Human Person, are transcribed on the character. His disciples must be baptized, *i. e.*,

* 1 John iv. 8. “God is love.”

† Gal. v. 22—25.

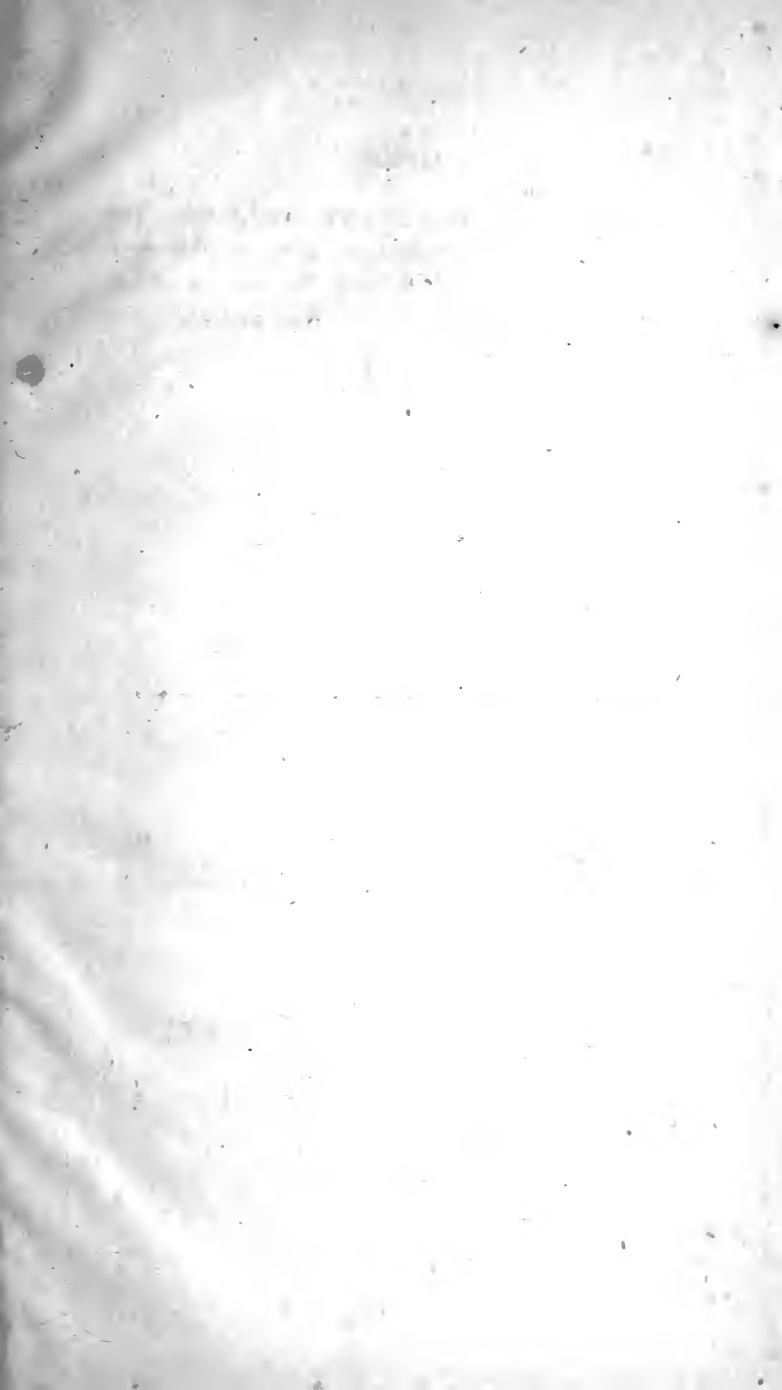
‡ Col. iii. 10.

regenerated into the divine love, the divine wisdom, and the divine life; in other words, these must be received into them from their infinite source, and reproduced there, in man's degree, the finite image of the infinite Original. And as they are but one name in Deity, they must be harmonized into one heavenly life, disposition, or quality in the creature. This concentration of the graces which flow from him who is "full of grace and truth," into the Christian character, and is indicated by the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is also strikingly presented in the Lord's promise to the Philadelphians—"I will write on him *the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, and my new name.*"

In closing these remarks, the writer ventures to hope, that they may not have been altogether without use, in throwing light on the subject of these pages. As regards the views of which he has been the humble expounder, whatever may be thought of them by others, he feels constrained to express his conviction that they are capable of being substantiated in all their bearings, and that no valid objections can be brought against them. Whilst they draw a clearly defined distinction, between Baptism and the New-Birth, so that it is impossible to mistake the one for the other, they, at the

same time, shew, in a manner equally clear, the reference which the ordinance, in all its parts and under all its aspects, has to the process of regeneration, of which it is the type and memorial in the church.

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